



THE KEY SALT ISSUE

Can the United States trust the Soviet Union?

One U.S. diplomat who has been laboring through the protracted negotiations for a second-stage strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT II) has definite views: "No. Absolutely not. No. No. No."

The question of Soviet trustworthiness—and America's ability to verify compliance with a SALT pact-dominated debate last week as Administration spokesmen said once again that an agreement was at hand. NEWSWEEK learned that one issue blocking a treaty, the definition of a "new type" of missile, has been resolved, leaving in dispute only the Soviet practice of encoding test data. But a mix of new issues—ranging from the compromise of a surveillance satellite's secrets to the loss of two electronics eavesdropping stations in Iran—raised new questions about America's verification abilities. As one U.S. official put it: "The Soviets will take advantage of everything they can. It is up to us to get a treaty that they cannot exploit at any level."

The U.S. failed to get that kind of treaty the first time around. At SALT I, U.S. negotiators asked for a variety of ways to monitor Soviet compliance, including on-site inspection of missile tests. President Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger set

pled for a clause saying merely that neither side would interfere with the other's "national technical means of verification." For the U.S., these include spy satellites, reconnaissance planes and monitoring stations along the Soviet border (sketch). In the last few months, a number of seemingly unrelated developments have convinced many Americans that this network of electronic eyes and ears on Soviet activity is insufficient:

- U.S. negotiators objected to a new Soviet method of coding the information beamed back to earth from their test missiles. This scrambling of test data—which in SALT gobbledegook is called "encrypted telemetry"—became one of the handful of issues that have stymied completion of the SALT II treaty.
- By paying a mere \$3,000 to a former Central Intelligence Agency clerk named William Kampiles, the Soviets obtained a copy of the technical manual for America's sophisticated KH-11 satellite.
- The revolution in Iran shut down two electronic monitoring stations that were used to eavesdrop on Soviet missile tests.

SALT opponents also seized on a report published recently by former CIA analyst George Sullivan claiming a pattern of deliberate Soviet deception stretching back to

the SALT I negotiations. Sullivan argues that the Russians insisted on vague definitions of such terms as "heavy" missiles in the first round of talks—or simply lied about their capabilities at that time.

In a speech sponsored by the hawkish Coalition of Peace through Strength, Lt. Gen. Daniel Graham, former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, said that the compromise of the KH-11 satellite and the loss of the Iranian listening stations robbed the U.S. of a "24-hour tip-off process that is absolutely critical to verification" of Soviet compliance with SALT II. "When this Administration tells you that we can duplicate [the Iranian posts' intelligence function] in Turkey, that is fraudulent," Graham charged. He claimed that the Caucasus Mountains block the signals from the crucial early stages of Soviet test flights. And at a breakfast meeting with reporters, Sen. Howard Baker of Tennessee said that he was "leaning against" SALT II. "I don't think there is any way you can legitimately say that treaty can be verified," Baker said.

VERY SERIOUS DOUBTS: The most public clash over SALT verification came when Sen. John Glenn of Ohio—who said he hoped Carter would eventually produce a treaty he could sign—aired his reservations at the christening of the Trident submarine. In the text of his speech, Glenn observed: "With the recent loss of our in-

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telligence-gathering capability in Iran, very
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to verify" SALT II. He had also planned to outline three proposals that would "place both nations on the same comparable monitoring base." Both passages were dropped from the delivered speech, but only after a half-hour telephone call from Jimmy Carter. Carter was furious that Glenn would suggest his own bargaining points while the negotiations were still under way. "There's a law," said one senior White House aide, "that the President is charged with negotiating treaties, not senators. This could blow the whole damn thing."

The White House persuaded Glenn to drop the offending passages, and tacked a rebuttal onto the remarks of Rosalynn Carter, who was also present. "Assure as I'm standing here today," Mrs. Carter said, "I can tell you that when Jimmy signs a SALT treaty, it will be verifiable." "It is my feeling," she added, "that premature public debate on issues such as this can be very damaging."

That argument—that the Administration cannot respond to critics without jeopardizing the negotiations themselves—has been seized upon by White House aides. "There are answers to all the charges," complains one of them, "but they're three categories above top secret. We can't even debate some of this stuff in a closed session of the Senate because it's so sensitive."

NO LOOPHOLES? The Administration argues in SALT I and that this time there won't be any loopholes. NEWSWEEK learned that the Administration has completed plans to compensate for the monitoring capability lost with the shutdown of the Iran stations, and that the President is satisfied that the new arrangement insures adequate verification of Soviet compliance. "It doesn't get it all back," an aide said, "but it's sufficient."

Optimists in the Administration still believe that they will be able to persuade the necessary 67 U.S. Senators that SALT II is airtight. Maintaining public support, they concede, will be tougher. One gambit under consideration at the White House is the release of one or more satellite photographs—a possibility made more attractive by the fact that the Soviets now know how the satellite works. But some officials believe that the photographs, which must be subjected to a variety of exotic treatments before they reveal their secrets, would be less than impressive to the untrained eye. How much of the U.S. reconnaissance and monitoring capability will the Administration reveal in order to ratify SALT II? "To the Senate, everything," said one Administration official last week. "With the American people, it's going to be tougher. People are going to have to trust their elected officials."

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